

**Our mission is to
empower media
that matters.**

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March 29, 2016

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Promoting the Availability of Diverse and Independent Sources of Video (DN 16-41)

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing on behalf of TV Santa Barbara, the South Coast Community Media Access Center, working to empower people to make media that matters. We do this by providing community members with the knowledge, resources, and tools to create and distribute their own original programming content. TV Santa Barbara is a nonprofit community media center which works with our community to share programming and information on the public access and educational access channels.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information for the FCC's inquiry. The FCC asks the following questions regarding Public, Educational and Government Access channels in the inquiry:

"We seek comment on MVPD's practices with respect to making PEG programming information available to subscribers. To the extent that MVPDs do not make this information available, is this for technical reasons, and if so, can the technical barriers be surmounted? Is the Congressionally-imposed prohibition against editorial control of PEG channels relevant to this issue? What is the source of the Commission's authority in this area, if any?"

While our local cable provider includes information from the local PEG channels on the IPG, it is difficult to have the program information updated in a timely manner. For instance, we recently uploaded current program information to the IPG system and 30 days later, the program information had not been updated on the IPG. This makes it difficult for cable viewers to know when a specific program is airing and to use the DVR in their cable set-top box to record programming.

The FCC also asks a series of questions about the ability of independent channels to achieve distribution on MVPD systems and the negotiating practices of MVPDs.

Despite our ability to provide a HD signal to the cable operator, the cable operator has refused to provide carriage of the local public, education, and government channels in HD and will not engage in discussions regarding HD distribution. Our local cable provider is not interested in exploring how local programming could be provided in HD. Unfortunately, as HD programming is more common, larger percentages of viewers watch TV programming in HD and no longer find local programming through channel surfing. Combine this with

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ineffective IPG information, and more viewers are not locating valuable local programming about their community.

Our local cable provider through an agreement with the local cable franchise authorities has only provided the local PEG channels in a digital format which requires a QAM tuner or cable set-top box to access the channels. Recently these channels were assigned new digital frequencies resulting in the local public access channel not being available to subscribers for more than 5 days while the cable company tried to figure out why the channel was no longer available. Despite reports to the contrary, the company continued to insist for more than 3 of these days that the channel was available to the cable subscribers. In addition, the cable company has made it very difficult for subscribers to obtain the complimentary cable boxes promised under the digital carriage agreement.

We appreciate the opportunity to enter this information into the record.

Sincerely,



Matthew Schuster